

Saul And His Sons Die In Battle

1 Samuel 31

MEMORY VERSE

1 SAMUEL 15:23

“Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Sunflower seeds and popcorn (un-popped and popped).

Two sheets of green construction paper for each child, hole punch, yarn, construction paper scraps, marker, pipe cleaners and glue.

Light Blue construction paper (1 sheet per three children), markers or crayons, glue and various types of large seeds or beans.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Reaping and Sowing

Bring to class some sunflower seeds and un-popped popcorn.

To introduce today’s lesson, talk about seeds. For example, “What will happen if I plant these sunflower seeds?” (They grow into sunflower plants.) “Can they grow into any other kind of plant?” (No.) “Why not?” (Because a seed will only produce a plant after its kind). “Can a sunflower seed become a pine tree?” (No.) Do the same thing showing the popcorn seeds. Explain that when a seed is planted, it will always grow into the plant or tree according to it’s kind.

In Galatians 6:7-8, we read, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” If we sow to our flesh, practice wrong doing, we will reap the sad consequences of our sins. If we sow to the Spirit, we will reap God’s

blessings upon our lives, a fulfilling life lived in harmony with God and man. Today, we will be studying the tragic death of King Saul. Saul harvested what he planted in life, and it was not good. **We will reap what we sow.**

You may want to give the children some popped popcorn later in class time.

LESSON TIME!

We have been studying Saul, the first king of Israel. He started off pretty well in his reign and service to the Lord. He desired to do what was right and God's blessing was upon him; but, in time, his heart turned away from the Lord. He began to sin greatly against God and His people. After a while, God rejected him and his family. Saul, his sons, and many others would die in battle.

Our story takes place during a time when there was a war between the Israelites and Philistines. The Philistines were winning, so the Israelites started retreating and ran from the Philistine army. Many of the Israelites were killed on Mount Gilboa.

1 SAMUEL 31:1

Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

It was only about 10 years earlier that David had stood up to the giant of the Philistines, Goliath. David had won a mighty victory over the enemy of Israel because he put his trust in the Lord. However, Saul had refused to follow the Lord. No longer did the nation have God's protection over them. The enemy was winning.

As the Israelites ran from the Philistines, many died. Our enemy wants to attack us. We are strong against his attacks when we are following the Lord and putting on His full armor. When we live a

life of disobedience, we open ourselves up to attack. Even at this time, if only Saul had turned to the Lord, the battle might have turned out much differently. **We will reap what we sow.**

1 SAMUEL 31:2-6

Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.

And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him.

So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.

The Philistines closed in on Saul and killed his three sons. Then they pursued Saul and wounded him badly. Since Saul was critically injured and could not escape, he asked his armor-bearer to kill him so that he would not be captured and tortured by the heathen army. His armor-bearer was afraid, so Saul took his own life. Saul's armor-bearer was responsible to take care of Saul. When Saul died, he took his own life and died with Saul. Saul, his sons, his armor-bearer and his entire army died on the same day.

Unfortunately, we see Saul's sin did not just affect him; it affected his family (his three sons who also died on the battlefield) and the entire nation. Do not be fooled. If we live a life of sin and rebellion towards God, others will be affected. The choices we make, whether good or bad, affect many other people.

1 SAMUEL 31:7

And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those who were on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

When the other Israelites saw that the Israelite army was defeated and Saul and his sons were dead, they fled from their homes and went into hiding. The entire nation felt the consequence of Saul's disobedience as Philistines overran many of their cities on this day.

Saul's sin affected himself, his family, and the nation that he was called to rule over. A godly leader will be a blessing to any nation, but an ungodly leader will only bring harm upon any nation. **We will reap what we sow.**

1 SAMUEL 31:8-10

So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people.

Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

The next day when the Philistine army came to take the valuables from the bodies, they discovered the bodies of Saul and his three sons. They cut off Saul's head and took off his armor. They sent messengers all over their land to proclaim their victory over Saul and his army. They put his armor in their temple of their idols and strung the bodies up on the wall of Beth Shan for all to see to show their victory over the Israelites and their God.

Saul's defeat meant victory for the enemy. How Satan likes to show off if he wins out over a life. How sad it is that the enemies of God and those who served false gods won the battle this day. Again, it did not have to be that way. If only Saul had chosen to live in obedience the Lord! **We will reap what we sow.**

Sowing His Word in Our Heart!

The object of this craft is to show the children good things to sow into their hearts in order to produce fruit for the Lord.

Using two sheets of green construction paper (to represent growth), cut out two large hearts. Using a hole-puncher, punch holes around the sides and bottom of the heart (not on top). Put the two hearts together and using yarn, lace through the holes that were punched into the heart. You should now have a heart pocket. On other sheets of construction paper, cut out several shapes of large seeds. You can do this before class. Write different good things to sow onto the paper seeds (or allow the children to write them). You can write things such as: read your Bible, pray, obey parents, fellowship with other Christians, serve others, etc.

Next, get 3 - 5 pipe cleaners and have the children (or have pre-cut) different shapes of fruit. On the shapes of fruit, write different fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc. Have the children glue the fruit to the pipe cleaner stems. If desired, you can glue a small magnet to the back of the heart.

Have all of the children get together when the craft is complete and explain that the seeds represent good seeds that we can sow into our hearts (reading Bible, etc.). The fruit represents what will come out of our hearts when we sow the right things. Finally, ask the children to write (or help them write) "We will reap what we sow" on the front of the heart.

1 SAMUEL 31:11-13

Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there.

Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard what had happened to Saul, all their brave men traveled all night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons and took them back to Jabesh where they gave them a proper burial. Then, they went without food, mourned for Saul and his sons, and worshipped God for seven days.

When Saul first became king so many years ago, he had helped the people of Jabesh Gilead. Saul must have always had a special place in their hearts. This one act of kindness on the part of the people from Jabesh Gilead showed that Saul did plant a few good seeds early in his life and good fruit came. The people cared about giving him a proper burial. The people from Jabesh Gilead can be commended for their service to Saul.

Saul had rejected God and, in turn, God rejected Saul. God would anoint a new king, David—a man “after His own heart,” who desired to follow and worship the Lord.

We can learn valuable lessons from the life and death of Saul. Daily, we make choices about the seeds we will sow. We will plant, and we will harvest. If we sow bad seed, choosing to walk in sin and disobedience, we will harvest the sad consequences of our disobedience. God’s desire is that we walk in relationship with Him, choosing to obey and serve the Lord. He would have us reap a harvest His blessings. **We will reap what we sow.**

Watch Your Seed Grow

Before class, cut several sheets of light blue construction paper into three strips lengthwise. Cut enough strips so that each child has one strip. After giving a strip to each child, have them fold the strip into four equal squares (like an accordion). Open back up and have the children draw soil in the bottom square, a long stem with leaves in the center squares and a flower in the top square. Get a variety of large seeds and have the children glue a seed at the bottom of the stem. On the back of the strip, have them write (or help them), “We will” on the first square; “reap” on the second; “what we” on the third; “sow” on the last square.

Perhaps, during snack time, use one of the crafts to demonstrate the theme. A plant begins with a seed. Then, it begins to grow (show the next square) and grow some more (show the next square) until finally it becomes a beautiful flower (show the final square). Explain to the children that when we sow good seed, beautiful things will result.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be obedient to God's Word. Ask the Lord to help the children to make the right choices leading to a blessed life. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.